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## *Environmental Focus as Earth Day Approaches*

April 11, 2008

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As Earth Day approaches, I look forward to the Environmental Policy and Protection committee's State of the Environment Presentation on April 22nd at 6 p.m. in Council Chambers.

Later that night at the Council meetings, we will be addressing two important local environment and preservation issues -- Purser Park and the Philipse Manor Historic District. I am working with both interest groups as well as City officials in hopes of reaching fair and equitable compromises.

Your voice on these issues is needed and I hope to see you at the upcoming meeting.

- Chuck

### **Make Your Voice Heard on SFC**



The Yonkers City Council recently accepted as complete the [Draft Environmental Impact Statement \(DEIS\)](#) for developer Struever, Fidelco, Cappelli's (SFC) proposal to build River Park Center, Cacace Center, and Palisades Point. The

proposed project would include a shopping complex topped by a ballpark, two 50-story apartment towers, two 25-story waterfront residential buildings, as well as the "daylighting" of portions of the Saw Mill River.

The City Clerk has published the Notice of Completion for the DEIS and has announced that the public hearing will be held at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, April 29 in the Council Chambers.

Following the public hearing there will be a two-week period, ending on Tuesday May 13, for the public to send written comments. At that time, there will be an additional opportunity for the public to speak on Tuesday, May 13 at 7:00 p.m. at Roosevelt High School.

Written comments on the DEIS will be accepted by the City Council until May 13, 2008. Such comments must be directed to Rocky Richard, Chief of Staff, Office of the Council President, 40 S. Broadway, Room 403, Yonkers, NY 10701 or by emailing her at rocky.richard@yonkersNY.gov

On a related note, the Council's Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Consultant, Lamont Blackstone, will be presenting his completeness review on whether the TIF feasibility study at the April 15 Real Estate Committee Meeting.

#### Yonkers Green Week, April 20-27

The Council's Green Policy Task Force will celebrate its first birthday by hosting a week's worth of green events throughout the city, from April 20 - 27.



From a city-wide environmental film series, energy saving workshops for homeowners and hands-on educational activities for the kids to special admission deals to the Hudson River Museum and the New York Water Taxi, Yonkers' community-based organizations, schools, government and non-governmental agencies, and others are hosting events and activities designed to educate residents about preserving and sustaining our natural environment.

Click [here](#) for the complete listing of events.

#### Playground Politics

On Tuesday night, the City Council postponed a vote to explore buying a warehouse next to the PEARLS Hawthorne School for an expanded playground and ballfield.

The proposal came after a group of parents and residents unsuccessfully lobbied Mayor Amicone this fall to help the school gain a grass playing field by offering Habitat For Humanity an alternative building site for two houses where the group proposed the field.

However the Mayor along with County Legislators Jose Alvarado and Ken Jenkins and Council Majority Leader Sandy Annabi and I have asked the County Executive Andy Spano to consider using Westchester County Legacy money for the acquisition of this additional parkland.



Members of the City Council intended to approve the resolution authorizing Mayor Amicone to negotiate a purchase price for the warehouse land, but questions about the resolution's language and the city's impending budget crisis postponed the vote. By the time the meeting is scheduled, the budget situation should be more clear and hopefully the language of the resolution will be as well.

Please sign up to speak at the April 22nd Committee of the Whole Meeting in support of parkland for our children.

For more information, click [here](#).

#### To Landmark or Not to Landmark



On April 3, our Real Estate Committee deliberated until midnight on the merits of the Landmarks Board's recommendation to landmark the Philipse Manor Historic District that would include property that Greyston owns and wants to tear down for workforce housing.

The land-marking proposal is the work of several Yonkers citizens who fear that an important parcel of the City's shrinking stock of historically important buildings will be torn down and forgotten. The site on Warburton between Wells and Manor House Square contains 13 buildings in various architectural styles dating from 1860 to 1900.

The [Greyston Foundation](#), on the other hand, is considering a \$35 million proposal to build a 16-story building with 108-units affordable housing units on the site. They argue that downtown Yonkers needs new housing for those who put in a hard day's work and who can not afford luxury priced housing.

Greyston's representatives contend that the properties are beyond preservation due to age, neglect and enormous costs to rehabilitate the buildings.

The historic district's applicants say it isn't so--that the buildings can be preserved and redeveloped using government and private funds set aside for historic preservation. Also, they would need a willing developer(s).

Last month, the Yonkers Planning Board sent the Landmarks Board a recommendation against the creation of a historic district. Mayor Amicone has spoken out against the historic district, saying he will use veto powers unless there is a Council majority of 5 or more votes in favor.

If we do not vote by May 4, Greyston will be able to apply for a demolition permit unless they agree to extend the moratorium so that the Council can adopt a compromise that allows for an economically feasible adaptive reuse of the historic properties.

At my request, County Executive Andy Spano and County Legislator Ken Jenkins have indicated a willingness to use County money to acquire the site on the corner of Broadway and Wells to allow Greyston to set its building back. This move could allow Greyston to build its workforce housing and generate enough positive cash flow to subsidize the adaptive reuse of the existing historic buildings. >br>

The project will be further discussed on April 15 during our Real Estate Committee meeting. The RE committee has requested an April 22 Council vote but I am hoping that with the extension of the moratorium we will be able to continue our negotiations with Greyston and the Landmarks Board.

For more information, check out John Golden's article in the [Westchester Business Journal](#).

### Council Holds Environmental Meeting on Earth Day



Please be advised that a joint meeting of the Environmental Policy & Protection Committee and the Green Policy Task Force has been scheduled for Earth Day, Tuesday, April 22nd, 2008 at 6 p.m.



4th Floor, City Hall.

in Council Chambers,

This will be an exciting environmental panel discussion about the City Council's "green" initiatives to date since we created the Green Policy Task Force last year.

The Task Force includes all City Council members and community representatives from each of their districts. They are Chairman Bob Walters (Lesnick); Nortrud Spero (Annabi, District 2); Terry Joshi (McLaughlin, District 4); Margaret Setterholm (McDow, District 1); Loretta Miraglia (Gronowski, District 3); Molly Roffman (Murtagh, District 5); Mel Goldstein (Barbato, District 6), as well as Joe D'Lando (Mayor Phil Amicone).

Members will discuss what each subcommittee is doing to help Yonkers become a city of green living. Two recent successes have been securing a \$300,000 grant to reduce diesel emissions on school buses and having the City Council unanimously pass the Bigger Better Water Bill, a state-wide initiative to place a 5-cent deposit on non-carbonated beverage containers such as water bottles.

Other projects under consideration include green building and LEEDS certification laws, anti-idling laws, gas-efficient and emissions-free City vehicles, reduction of pollution and run-off into rivers and lakes, and alternative sources of electricity.

This meeting is open to the public and will be televised live on Channel 78.

#### Council Majority Votes for Preservation and Environment



On Tuesday April 8, the City Council voted 4- 3 in favor of allocating operating costs of \$20,000 to the Green Policy Task Force and \$50,000 to the Landmarks Board to start indexing a comprehensive historic building inventory (as is required by the legislation that created them).

I was pleased that Majority Leader Sandy Annabi, Minority Leader Liam McLaughlin and

Councilmember Joan Gronowski voted in favor of making these wise investments. They realize the impact these pilot programs are having upon the City's future-already to the tune of \$300,000!



To our point, the money was already budgeted for this year and if it went unused, it would be certified for use in FY 2009-10 if even available at that time.

### Yonkers Gets \$300,000 School Bus Emissions Grant



News that Yonkers won a \$300,000 grant to reduce school bus emissions thanks to the Green Policy Task Force and the Board of Education broke last week.

A second goal of the grant project is to educate drivers, students, staff, and parents about Yonkers 3- minute idling law that restricts bus and car

*(Dark cloth shows exhaust stain before retrofitting)*

idling on school grounds. The grant application process started last summer after the Yonkers City Council voted to create the City's first Green Policy Task Force (GPTF) to find and assess pro-environment policies such as bus retrofitting. Other projects under consideration include green building and LEEDS certification laws, anti-idling laws, gas-efficient and emissions-free City vehicles, reduction of pollution and run-off into rivers and lakes, and alternative sources of electricity.

Monday's announcement is proof that we are doing right by Yonkers and I would like to thank all involved for their hard work in securing this grant. Those people include GPTF members Molly Roffman and Loretta Miraglia, as well as my past and present Legislative Aides Aaron Smith and Samantha Wapnick, and interns Tom O'Connell and Lily Starobin. Additionally Jeff Byrne, director of the asthma program at St. John's Riverside Hospital, and Federated Conservationists of Westchester's SNAP! (Students for No Air Pollution) program are to thank.

Yonkers is the fourth-largest city in New York State and spends \$35.9 million a year on school transportation for about 850 runs a day.

### New Appointments for Parks and Land Use

The City Council approved hiring the following people to join the City of Yonkers at our Tuesday night meeting.

Please welcome Yonkers native Craig Berardo as Deputy Commissioner of Parks. His more than 20 years of experience working for the City in maintenance will serve us well as he takes on his new role overseeing our parks and programs.

Deputy Commissioner of Planning and Development Sharon Ebert comes to us from both the Philadelphia and NYC Housing Authorities and has extensive experience with LEEDS standards for green buildings and the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Also please welcome Harry Singh and Anthony Landi to the Zoning Board of Appeals. Both have tremendous levels of experience for the jobs. Landi, who served as the City's Deputy City Manager as well as Westchester's Deputy Commissioner of Public Works, has served on many Westchester County boards such as planning, traffic safety, solid waste and more. Singh, a highly-accredited Realtor and appraiser, has also



served on numerous boards and holds many community affiliations with such organizations as the Lion's Club International where he is the regional chairman.

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